

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

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FOL REPEAT LONDON 10299 SENT ACTION SECSTATE

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S E C R E T LONDON 10299

E.O. 11652: XGD-1

TAGS: MARR, PARM, UK, NATO

SUBJECT: BRITISH DEFENCE REVIEW

1. DURING CONVERSATION AUGUST 12 ON OTHER MATTERS, KILLICK, DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY AT THE FCO, TOLD US THAT RECENT EVENTS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN HAD LED BRITISH DEFENSE PLANNERS TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE DEFENSE REVIEW, AND SPECIFICALLY TO REEXAMINE IMPORTANCE OF BRITISH BASES IN CYPRUS AND MALTA. HE IMPLIED THAT NO FIRM DECISIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN REGARDING MEDITERRANEAN BASES PRIOR TO HOSTILITIES ON CYPRUS, BUT THAT MISISTERS WISHED TO HAVE A REASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF BRITISH FACILITIES IN THE LIGHT OF CURRENT TENSIONS IN THE EASTER MEDITERRANEAN. IN REPLY TO OUR QUESTION KILLICK SAID THAT MALTA HAD PROVED TO BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AS A HOLDING AND STAGING AREA DURING THE CYPRUS CRISIS.

2. GIVEN NEED TO RE-EXAMINE BASE STRUCTURE IN EASTERN

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MEDITERRANEAN AND MORE BASICALLY THE POLITICAL DESIRA-

BILITY OF DEFERRING DECISIONS ON THE DEFENSE REVIEW UNTIL
AFTER THE POSSIBLE FALL ELECTION, KILLICK DID NOT THINK
THAT THE UK WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CONSULT WITH THE
US AS EARLY AS HAD BEEN HOPED. HE MADE THE PERSONAL
GUESS THAT BRITISH MIGHT NOT FEEL THEY COULD DISCUSS THE
DEFENSE REVIEW WITH US UNTIL A COUPLE OF WEEKS AFTER AN
ELECTION IF ONE IS IN FACT HELD IN EARLY OCTOBER.
SOHM

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